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Concerning Three Items (Faith & Science Update)

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John T. Baldwin

Soft Tissue Recently Found in Dinosaur Thigh Bone

In a jaw-dropping discovery reported in the summer of 2005, paleontologists Mary H. Schweitzer, Jack Horner, et al. located soft tissue and vessels preserved in hind limb elements of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*.¹ The specimen lay entombed at the base of Hell Creek Formation, Montana, where other dinosaurs have been excavated. The authors interpret the bone as resting in well-sorted sandstone of estuarine origin. This means that the dinosaur was buried under aquatic conditions in sediment formed in a location where a river meets a sea. Although not establishing the biblical flood, the aquatic deposition of this dinosaur is interesting because circumstances similar to this would be expected in a flood of global proportions.

Most importantly, the scientists identified, as described in their own words, “pliable soft-tissue blood vessels . . . still retaining their flexibility, resilience, original hollow nature, and

CONCERNING THREE ITEMS

three-dimensionality.”²

Because Schweitzer dates this specimen as originating in the upper Mesozoic portion of the geologic column, and therefore about 68 million years old as reckoned by evolutionary theory, she considers this discovery to be “totally shocking,” because soft tissue is not considered to be a possibility in such old fossils.³ Her technician soaked the fragments in a weak acid solution, which revealed the elastic vessels. The team also found round red microstructures inside the blood vessels that looked like red blood cells.⁴ Remarkably, several of the vessels were so elastic—like rubber bands—that they rebounded when repeatedly stretched by the technician.⁵

For Creationists, this opens up new ways of interpreting the age and decay rates of animals. Can soft tissue actually remain pliable for 68 million years in fossils? Or does this discovery possibly point to the need for a more recent and rapid burial and preservation of this dinosaur?

Lately, coal samples with conventional ages ranging 65 to 350 million years have been subjected to Carbon-14 dating. Surprisingly, each sample tested showed an age falling in the relatively young age range of 30 to 40 thousand years irrespective of their greatly differing conventional coal ages.⁶ Evolutionary scientists would have expected these coal samples to be Carbon-14 dead and thus to have registered no age.

One wonders whether the dinosaur soft tissue would yield results similar to the coal samples were the dinosaur tissue tested by Carbon-14. In other words, would the organic dinosaur samples all register ages in the thousands of years? This would be in striking contrast with their alleged evolutionary ages of 68 million years.

Historic Statement on Creation by the GC Executive Committee

Every Adventist needs to know about and be conversant with the "Response to an Affirmation of Creation," published on page 11 of the NAD Edition of the *Adventist Review* (August 2005), one of the most significant statements voted by the General Conference Executive Committee because it stands for God-honoring truth.

After three years (2002-2004) of church-sponsored International Faith and Science conferences, the General Conference Executive Committee

voted to reaffirm, now in explicit terms, the historic position of the Adventist Church on the doctrine of Creation and the Flood. This permits the witness of the church to the world to shine more clearly and convincingly regarding Creation.

Four new terms appear for the first time in a voted Adventist document on Creation. Three of the four relate to Creation: "*recent*," "*literal*," and "*the historicity of Genesis 1-11*." The church now formally states to the world that the Creation was recent and historical, implying that it literally occurred within actual Earth history a few thousand years ago. Moreover, because the Creation was the beginning of all life forms, affirming a recent, historical Creation means that the fossils are also of recent origin. This has huge implications regarding the Adventist interpretation of the geologic column. These implications show why this document is so important for the future of the Adventist mission, message, education, and scholarly research.

Finally, the fourth term states that the Flood was *global*. Here again, the church has articulated a witness to the world that clearly represents the truth, but is very unpopular. A global flood is needed to account for the formation of basic portions of the geologic column after the Fall, thereby establishing the possibility of a six-day,



recent, historical Creation—without which the authority of Scripture, the Sabbath, the atonement, and other essential truths, are undermined.

Adventists can be deeply grateful for the moving of the Holy Spirit in the formation of the “Response to an Affirmation of Creation,” and for leaders in step with the Spirit. It is now essential that cordial, open, respectful dialogue and research regarding origins continue with vigor and enthusiasm among the entire Adventist family.

Nature Testifies to Its Creator: *The March of the Penguins*

In discussing faith and science, it seems important not only to consider the evidence of correspondence between the two realms, but also to consider the beauty of nature itself and how nature still speaks of the goodness of God.⁷

If you have not seen it, by all means watch *The March of the Penguins*, a DVD documentary concerning Antarctic Emperor penguins. These flightless birds walk 70 miles to breeding grounds in order to raise their fuzzy chicks. In fierce blizzard conditions the devoted parents alternately trek back to the ocean for food. Their heroic behavior represents a stunning display of God’s wisdom and faithfulness in providing these creatures with sufficient strength and instinctual wis-

dom to survive successfully in the harshest conditions found on this planet. If God equips the penguins in such a way, how much more will He provide wisdom and direction in our lives (Matt. 6:30; Prov. 4:11).

Esthetically, the sleek, long, thin orange stripe on the black bill of the adult Emperor penguin matches the orange area shading into white just behind its black eye areas. This must be an example of intentional color coordination by an Artist who originally selected these color relationships, thereby illustrating His love and sense of the beautiful. “His work is perfect” (Deut. 32:4, KJV).

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- ¹ Mary H. Schweitzer, et al., “Soft-Tissue Vessels and Cellular Preservation in *Tyrannosaurus rex*,” *Science*, vol. 307 (March 15, 2005), pp. 1952-1955.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 1,995.
- ³ Erik Stokstad, “*Tyrannosaurus rex* Soft Tissue Raises Tantalizing Prospects,” *Science*, vol. 307 (March 25, 2005), p. 1,852.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1,953.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1,954.
- ⁶ Paul Geim, “Carbon-14 Content of Fossil Carbon,” *Origins* 51 (2001), pp. 6-30; John Baumgardner, Andrew Snelling, et al., “Measurable C-14 in Fossilized Organic Materials: Confirming the Young Earth Creation-Flood Model,” in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Creationism, Technical Symposium Sessions*, Robert L. Ivey, Jr., ed. (Pittsburgh: Creation Science Fellowship, Inc., 2003), pp. 127-154.
- ⁷ *Education*, p. 101.